

DS
413
F11A3

A
A
0
0
1
1
3
7
1
7
2
1



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

California
Regional
Facility

RECOLLECTIONS OF INDIAN LIFE

RECOLLECTIONS OF
INDIAN LIFE

BY
M. A. FABER

LONDON: PRIVATELY PRINTED AT
THE CHISWICK PRESS

1910

DS
413
F11 A3

PREFACE

EARLY in the spring of 1908 my mother-in-law, Mary Anne Faber, passed to her eternal rest.

Among the many papers she left behind were the two following MSS. One—an account written for youthful readers of some incidents in her own life in India when her husband, General William Raikes Faber, was with H.M. 35th Regiment in Calcutta in 1853. My dear husband, who was then a child, was with them. The other—an imaginary letter describing a friend's sufferings in the Indian Mutiny. These manuscripts were written while she was living at Little Comberton, near Pershore, in 1872, and were evidently intended for publication.

Feeling that it would have been the wish of my dear husband, who only survived his mother a brief eight months, to have these manuscripts printed, I have done so, and now present them to all who love and cherish the memory of those two dear ones who are "Not lost, but gone before."

E. FABER.

HAMPSTEAD,
Easter, 1910.

I know there are no errors
 In the great Eternal plan,
And all things work together
 For the final good of Man.
And I know when my soul speeds onward
 In its grand Eternal quest,
I shall say, as I look earthward,
 Whatever is—is best.

E. W. WILCOX.

RECOLLECTIONS OF INDIAN LIFE

FAR, far away towards the sunrise lies a large country called Hindustan, or, as we more often call it, India. It has high mountains, so high that the snow never melts upon the top of them, large rivers and vast tracks of jungle where snakes and wild beasts have their holes and dens, and where the foot of man has never trod. This land is the home of lions, tigers, leopards, bears, elephants, buffaloes, and other wild beasts; also of many large fierce birds. But it is also the home of many beautiful animals and birds, and is a land in which are found delicious fruits and all manner of sweet spices and also many precious stones.

Though the Queen of England is also "Empress of India," yet the people of India are quite different from the people of England; they are quite as unlike us as their country is unlike ours. Their appearance, their dress and their manners are quite different from ours.

Some few years ago we arrived at the mouth of the River Hoogly, on which stands Calcutta, the chief city of India. We had been four long months on board ship, and were very glad to have the prospect of being on shore again. The pilot came on board,

and a little steamer soon afterwards came to tow us up the river. She looked very small by the side of our large vessel, but a rope was made fast between the sharp end or bows of our ship to the hinder end or stern of the steamer, and she pulled us along.

The banks on each side were flat and low. We could not see a sign of life upon them. On the third day, towards evening, we came to a very pretty bend in the river, and soon after to some nice houses with gardens coming down to the water's edge. The flowers in them were gay, and looked bright and cheering to us, who had not seen any for so long a time.

At last the anchor was dropped, and the boats came to take the passengers on shore. Such happy meetings followed. Husbands met wives, brothers met sisters, and everybody looked happy. The ladies one by one sat down in an armchair on deck, in which was spread one of the large flags. This was wrapped carefully round the lady's feet; it was then raised by pulleys from the deck, lifted over the side of the ship and gently lowered into the boat below; the lady got out, the chair was pulled up again, and another lady took her turn.

The boatmen were very strange looking men, nearly black, and with scarcely any clothes on, only a roll of coloured calico fastened round their waists, and coming about half way down to their knees.

A carriage was waiting for us at the landing-stage, and in the cool of the evening air we drove sixteen miles to Barrackpore, where we were going to stay

for a little time. The drive was most beautiful, the trees on each side of the road, large fine trees, all since then blown down by one of the tremendous storms which visit hot countries.

Here and there we passed a hut, and sometimes there were shrubs and bushes growing beneath the trees, and seeming to be quite alive, with moving stars which flitted here and there without ceasing. These flying stars were little insects called fire-flies.

By day they look like a brown fly; at night they are bright and shining. When we reached the hotel at Barrackpore, we found our servants waiting for us; for in India, wherever English people go, they have their own servants to wait on them. Our little party only consisted of three and an English servant, who is always treated with great respect by the natives, and called the "Chota Mem," or little mistress. We found two servants to attend upon us at our meals, another to wait on the gentleman, called a "bearer," and two women to wait on the lady and her little boy; they were called "ayahs." The men who were to wait at dinner were dressed in white trousers, long coats of light blue cloth, with a white girdle round their waists, and white turbans, on which they wore their master's crest in silver, mounted on blue cloth.

Their feet were bare, for in India no native goes into the presence of any one above him in rank with shoes or any covering on his feet. The bearer had a white turban, and a girdle also, but he wore a blue jacket and had no trousers, only a roll of white calico, which came half way to his knees. Of the

ayahs, there was hardly anything to be seen but a little bit of face and hands.

They were in white with a large long white cloth like a scarf put on their heads; they put one end of this over the chest, and then throw the other longer end across over the shoulder; it is of white calico, bound with red. It hides all the hair, and comes up to the chin; their wrists and hands peep out from beneath it, and on their wrists they wear bracelets, called bangles. When an ayah has just got her month's wages, she generally wears a number of bangles; as the month goes on she has fewer, till at the end of it she often has only one on each wrist, or, at the most, two. They also wear bangles on their ankles.

When we came in, the servants all touched their forehead with the palm of their hand and bowed, and very soon they were all busied in attending on us. They moved about without making any noise, and if sent out of the room for anything, we did not know they had come back, till all at once the dusky face was seen just behind us. They could not speak any English. These native servants never live in the house; they provide their own places to sleep in, and cook their own food. The bearers are all Hindoos, and so are the upper class of ayahs; their religion is very strict, and if a Christian should even look at their food, they must throw it all away and break the dish or pot in which it is. They are also very particular about the work they do; thus: though a bearer may dust the room, his caste forbids him to sweep it; this must be done by a servant of a lower

caste. Even in the winter time, which was the season when we reached India, the weather is hot in the day-time, and those who wish to go out, go early in the morning or late in the evening.

We were fortunate enough to have an elephant belonging to the Governor General's establishment lent to us, and it was brought at five o'clock in the morning for our early ride. It looked very handsome with its red and gold trappings. The "Mahout," as the man is called who guides it, was dressed in red worked with gold twist, and there were two other servants dressed in red to run by its side. On the elephant's back was a howdah (something like a large box without a lid, and covered with red cloth, embroidered with gold) for us to sit in; it held two grown people and a child comfortably. The Mahout told the elephant to kneel down, which it did directly, and steps were put against the howdah for us to get into it. As soon as we were seated, the elephant got up quite gently, and we found ourselves going up, up, to what seemed a great height. The elephant was about nine feet high.

The motion was not at all unpleasant, and it was very pretty to see the elephant break off the boughs that hung in our way with his long trunk. He broke them quite easily without even stopping. When we came home, the Mahout told us the elephant could pick up anything, however small, with his trunk, just as easily as he could break the large branches of the trees. We put a shilling down on the road, and he picked it up and put it quite gently into our hands

with his long trunk. This trunk is round, and hangs from his nose nearly down to the ground. On each side of his nose he has large ivory tusks. His tail is thin, his feet large and flat, he is of a dark brown colour with a smooth skin. When we saw his cleverness, we all wondered and said to each other that the more we saw of the works of God, the more we knew His power and goodness were infinite. The elephant is perhaps the wisest of the beasts; he seems to understand all that is said to him; he is very fond of sweet things, and we used to give the elephant we rode on sweet cakes every day when he came. He is besides fond of spirits, and when his driver wishes him to make some great effort, he will promise him a bottle of arrack, a spirit something like rum. The elephant will then put out all his strength, and woe to the driver if he deceives the animal and does not give him the arrack. The elephant never forgets or forgives a deceit.

In the evening when the air was again cool, we drove out in our carriage with two pretty Arab horses; if we drove through any village the two grooms ran in front, carrying each a "chousi," this has a painted wooden handle, and as fastened into the wood it looks like a horse's tail. The grooms were dressed in short blue round coats with white girdles and white turbans, and the same piece of white cloth round their waists and coming half way down their legs; their feet and legs bare. They ran in front of the horses clearing the way. When we had passed through the village they got up and stood behind the carriage again.

The park at Barrackpore is very pretty, it lies beside the river called Hooghly, and contains a great many beautiful trees, there are also cages of wild beasts, and some large cages filled with birds. There were at that time two bears in two cages, both of them black bears, the smaller of them was called "Julie," and was very tame, the larger one was very fierce. Julie was pleased to have cakes and sweets given to her, but the bear in the next cage was so fierce that no one liked to go near it, for it would stand on its hind legs and spit. Then there were monkeys, some very tame and some very wild; there were two pretty young tigers of a tawny colour beautifully striped with black, they played together and rolled each other over and over like young kittens; there was a handsome black leopard who always looked very sad and sorrowful, and seemed to be longing to be bounding again in the wild jungle.

It always made one sad to look at that beautiful leopard shut up alone in that narrow cage.

After a time we went to Calcutta to our own house, we were then obliged to have some more servants, but I will only tell you about one, the tailor. In that hot country English people can do very little needlework, and the "chota beebee" was not able to do more than amuse the child whom she had charge of and do a little work. So that there was a tailor who had to be under her and do whatever she told him. In India, there are no women servants except ayahs; the women go out nowhere, and except the very poorest are never seen. So instead of having a

woman to do the needlework we had a man. He sat on the ground cross legged, and worked as we should call it backwards; if he wanted to run a long seam in a dress, or to hem any long piece, he fastened a loop of cotton to it and put the loop round his large toe, and worked away faster and more neatly, I am afraid, than many an English girl can do. If his reel of cotton rolled away he would put out his foot and pick it up with his toe. These men not only hem and sew, but they can embroider beautifully in white and colours, working dresses, handkerchiefs, and scarves with the finest and most delicate work.

In the evening, when their work is done, servants sit down generally in a ring and smoke a long pipe, which from the noise it makes is called "hubble bubble," and one of them tells stories to the rest; they will amuse themselves in this way for half the night. They always have a long time given to them for their dinner in the middle of the day, and they often go to sleep then. They live almost entirely on rice, fruit, and vegetables. The part of the town in which the natives live is called "the bazaar"; and often in the night you may hear the sounds from the bazaar of beating "tom-toms," a sort of little drum, and all kinds of noises, while perhaps nearer to you the jackals are prowling about, and making their cry, which begins with a deep sound and dies off in a wail like that of a child. So that night is not a very quiet time. After we were settled in Calcutta the children of the English soldiers used to come to me on every Sunday morning to read the Bible and listen to some

nice book. We all went to church at six o'clock in the morning, for the sun was too hot for English people to go out later in the day. The children all lived near by, and as soon as they had had their breakfast they came, great and small, boys and girls.

It was a pleasant time for us all, everything was new to us, for our Regiment (the 35th) had only lately come from England.

About three or four months after we were settled in Fort William the cholera broke out. Every day there were many deaths, people who were well and out in the morning were carried to the grave at sunset; when they wished each other good-night it was doubtful whether they would ever wish each other good-morning. Children seem to feel it a very solemn time; one or another, as the Sundays came round, had often lost a brother, sister, or mother.

One day the bearer came to say one of the little girls wished to see me. The child had a little brother and sister; they were all crying. She said her father had died in the night, and the doctor was now with her mother, who she was afraid would not live till the evening. Poor little girl! it was true enough; her mother was buried that evening, and she and her little brother and sister, and a baby besides, were all left orphans.

Hester was a good girl; her mother had brought her up well, and though she did not live to know it, her counsels were a great blessing to her children. Hester was only fourteen, left in a strange country with the care of these children. No wonder she was

very sad and very much troubled in her heart. A kind neighbour took the baby, and another offered to help with the other children. The Government would have sent Hester home, but she did not want to go, for her father's friends were almost too poor to find food for themselves, and her mother had been an orphan.

In Calcutta there is a school for English orphans, and this seemed to be the best place for these poor children; meanwhile, till arrangements could be made for them to go there, Hester did the best she could at home. She kept the little ones clean and neat, and did all that she had seen her mother do as well as she could. The children loved her dearly, and were really very good children. She brought them with her on Sunday, and taught them a verse of a hymn to say, though little Jack could hardly speak plainly. Hester herself had learnt part of a chapter that tells the comforting story of our Lord raising Lazarus. We read that chapter and talked of the love and tenderness of our Saviour Jesus Christ to all who are in sorrow. It was very comforting to Hester to think that Jesus, our Saviour, can still see us and knows everything that troubles us now, though He is in heaven and we are on earth, and that He still feels for us in all our sorrows.

We always chose a text before we parted that we were to think of till the next Sunday, and on this Sunday we took this verse: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

In a few days Hester and her little brother and sister went to the school. The baby was too young and too sickly to go there, and it stayed with the kind woman who had taken charge of it. It pined for its mother, and in a few weeks it died, so worn and wasted, in spite of all the care taken of it, that no one could wish its little life to be lengthened out in such suffering.

I went to see Hester the evening after she went to school; there were a number of girls there of all sizes and ages; they were out in the garden at play, and looked very happy. Hester felt very shy and sad, but she said they were all very kind to her. The little ones were at play with some other children. Just at that moment all the smaller children were standing behind a corner of the verandah round the house watching a mongoose, a little animal something like a ferret, only with dark brown, rather long fur, and very bright dark eyes, altogether much prettier than the ferret. The mongoose had found some eggs, and being very fond of them, it took its own way of eating them. It brought them out one by one into the verandah, dashed them on the hard pavement, and then sucked up the insides. As it brought out the third egg Jack clapped his hands and laughed. The mongoose looked up and saw the children, who now all ran towards it, and so its meal ended for that day.

There was a tame jackal and a little dog as well as the mongoose, and the children were delighted to watch these three at play, chasing each other round and round till they were tired. But another parting

was soon in store for Hester; the plain country was very hot, too hot for young children, and Hester's little brother and sister were to be sent, with all the other small children, up to the hill country, where the air is cool and healthy.

It was a great trial to Hester to part from them, and she cried bitterly. There was a girl in the school a little older than Hester, and she was very kind to her, and told her the change was for the good of her little brother and sister, and it would be selfish to wish to keep them in the heat.

"But," sobbed Hester, "they are so little, they will fret, and when they leave off fretting they will forget me."

"They will not fret, I hope, dear Hester," said her friend, "and as for forgetting you, I do not think they will do that; you know you can write to them, and they and you will not always be separated; you will meet again."

"Yes," said Hester. "I hope so. But perhaps not till after we are all dead."

"Do not think that," said her friend. "I hope you will meet in a few years at furthest, all alive and well. I saw my little sister last year, and why should not you see yours. Be comforted, dear Hester, no good ever comes of our being downhearted; hope for the best, and," she said in a lower voice, "trust in God, and He will help you."

Hester dried her eyes, and when the matron began to tell them at tea-time stories of the hill country, and of all the pretty houses there, and of how happy the

children were up there, Hester felt almost glad Jack and Susan were going where they would be so well off.

The next week they left. Hester packed up a little basket which the matron lent her with some oranges and bread-fruit for the children; she made a jacket for Susan's doll, and put it in one corner, and cut out some little dogs and men in paper for Jack, and put them in another corner.

Bread-fruit is very much liked in hot countries; it is in shape something like a small cucumber; the peel is of a deep yellow or gold colour when ripe, and the inside is something like a rich, rather mellow pear. Hester went to the steamer to see her little brother and sister off; they were to go up the river for some part of the way. She watched them as long as she could see them waving their handkerchiefs to her. Then she went back to the school, feeling rather sad and lonely, to talk to her kind friend who had tried to comfort her.

When we called to see her, she was looking quite bright, and had begun to make a housewife to send to Susan on her birthday.

After we had left her, we drove to the bazaar to buy some of the curious and pretty things that are to be seen and bought there. The syces, as they are called, ran before the carriage to clear the way, and in some places the streets were so narrow that the carriage had to stop and the syces had to get it almost into a shop for the other vehicle to pass it. The shops are more like booths than our shops, and

are all open. We stopped at one where there were all sorts of pretty things from China. There were large balls of carved ivory filled with smaller balls, all in sizes. You could see these inner balls through the open carved work, and hear them rattle, but not a join could be found anywhere in the ivory of the outer ball. Then there were figures of elephants with all their trappings carved in ivory, red and white, and seated on the elephant was the mahout, and all his dress was carved in the same way. Then there were some china cups and saucers, made of china so fine and clear that holding up the cup to the light and looking at it from the inside you could see the painting through almost as if it were glass. There were also screens with Chinese men and women painted on them, and the faces made of wax and fastened on; pretty fans, too, made of feathers, and painted in different colours.

Besides these, there was a great deal of what is called "Bombay work," because it comes from a part of India called Bombay; boxes carved in sweet smelling sandal wood, cut from the sandal tree, and other boxes of ivory inlaid with the tiniest pieces, so that the joins could not be seen. In other shops were scarves of fine soft woolly material, embroidered in gorgeous patterns with all kinds of bright-coloured silks. All this fine work is done by men. They also make ladies' dresses and pocket handkerchiefs of the fibre of the cocoa-nut and embroider them in rich fine work.

It is a curious sight in the evening to see the

natives coming out from their daily work. There are such numbers of them crowded together in the bazaar that they look like bees coming out of a hive. Perhaps there may be a panic in the throng, and one might think the houses could hold no more; in a minute it begins to pour out again as thickly as before. We often drove in the cool of the evening up the road towards Barrackpore to see the fine trees and the pretty fireflies, of which there are always most in leafy and shady places. We then sometimes saw two women grinding their flour at a grindstone just as in the Bible they are said to do. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left." Sometimes a beggar with nothing on him but a ragged cloth around his waist, barely reaching to his knees, would be sitting waiting near some large house, reminding us of Lazarus waiting for the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, and we have even seen the dogs coming to lick his sores, just as the Bible speaks of their doing to Lazarus.

In Calcutta the houses all had flat roofs on which in the morning and evening people often walk. Then we could very well understand how it was that his friends took the man sick of the palsy on to the roof of the house, and let him down inside, that he might ask Jesus to cure him. Almost every day, in a great many ways, we were reminded of something in the Bible.

At last, after the weather had been very very hot for some time, we began to expect the rainy season.

In these hot countries there is seldom rain except at certain seasons of the year; there is the hot weather, the rainy season, the cold weather, the little rains (as they are called) which come in our springtime, and then the hot weather again. Everybody was looking and longing for rain. At last, one evening, the sky grew very dark, the birds began to fly very wildly, and the wind rose and blew hard. Presently the bearers came hastily into the rooms, and shut up all the windows. There was no rain, but only dust which filled the air, covering the whole large town, like a cloud high, high above all the houses, and so thick that nothing could be seen through it. It was a very curious sight and lasted for two whole hours. There were several of these dust-storms, and then one evening a tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, and rain; such thunder as we never hear in England, and such rain as we never see or hear either. It seemed like the continual pour of a waterfall, and the lightning was very bright, and the flashes, and roar of thunder unceasing. How blessed and comforting to know that the mighty God who rules and sends these storms loves and cares for us poor sinful creatures.

The rains now fairly began, and the thirsty ground began to suck in the reviving waters with thankfulness. Sometimes the air was cool, sometimes very close, but every one felt the rain to be delicious. One evening, when it was too wet to go out, a man came to our house to beg. The natives called him a "fakir," and thought him a very holy man because he had let his nails grow very very long, and had kept his arm

held up straight so long that he could not move it. He was an old man, almost naked; it was very sad to see him, and to think that he could hope to please a God of love and mercy by putting himself to so much torture. I asked the bearer how long the fakir had held his arm like that; he asked the fakir, who said for a long long time, ever since he was quite a young man; he grew angry when we tried to reason with him, and to tell him of a better way of pleasing the great God, and as he had already got some money, he went away.

Another day a snake-charmer came with his snakes; he had them in a bag, and he let them out in the room, then played on a little pipe and they came back to him. He had wonderful command over them, and they went and came at his bidding. Then he threw some gilt balls up into the air, and caught them, beginning with one, then two, till at last he had seven or eight balls and even more, all going up regularly and he catching them, some in one hand, some in the other, but never letting one fall; he did this for about ten minutes, then he put down the balls one by one as he caught them till all were gone. Hester had come to our house that day to drink tea with the "Chota Mem," and she was delighted. Then the man span a number of tops, which pleased our little boy very much; he took them up in his hand and put them down while spinning, one after another, with wonderful quickness. Next he asked for a hat, which he turned over top upwards on the ground; in a moment he took it up, and there was an orange

tree; he put it down again, took it up, and the orange tree had blossoms on it; put it down again and took it up, and the orange tree was covered with fruit. This was the most wonderful of all his juggling, and no one could find out how he managed it.

By and by the time came for us to leave Calcutta. I went to see Hester, and found her very happy at school; she had had a nice letter from the matron of the hill school to tell her about Jack and Susan, who were both quite well and very happy; she said they remembered her very well. Hester had made some friends among her schoolfellows, and the matron gave her a good character, and said she was an industrious, truthful girl, and that she seemed likely to get on well. I took her to see the grave of her father and mother; poor girl! she still grieved very much for their loss, but she said, with tears in her eyes, that her mother would have been very grateful had she known how well her children would have been cared for. Even in the midst of her great pain on the day she died, she had prayed that God would provide for them. We again repeated the text that had comforted Hester so much in the first days of her grief: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live." Hester said she should never forget them, but by God's help would try to follow all their good counsels, and remember them to teach to her brother and sister. Hester came to spend the next day with us, and stayed till quite late in the evening. Then we bade her good-bye with much sorrow on both sides at the separation. I have

never seen Hester again, nor do I expect to see her again in this world; but for some time I heard of her now and again and always a good account. When I last heard of her, she was on the point of being married, and I trust she is now a good and happy wife, if she is still alive. But since the terrible days of the Mutiny I have heard nothing of her.

On the afternoon of the day after parting from Hester we went on board ship. We were to be towed down to a place called Moulmein by a steamer. There were soldiers and their wives and children on board our vessel. The first part of the time was rather uncomfortable, the poor little children were cross, and some of them ill and altogether rather unhappy. But when we got out of the river and really at sea, the air was cooler and we were all more comfortable. The poor ayah looked the most unhappy, she was ill and cold, and though I gave her a shawl to wrap herself in she looked very miserable and chilled, for the weather was wet and she was not used to the sea. By degrees, though, even she got better and when the sun shone out bright and hot she was quite happy.

There were several of my Sunday scholars on board; amongst them a little girl called Louisa, who was a great favourite. She was so good-tempered and so cheerful that everybody liked her. She was, besides, a useful little girl and a great help to her mother. The day before we landed was Sunday, and I well remember Louisa's bright happy face when she came to say her hymn and afterwards when we all met on

deck for the Church Service. I heard her childish voice near me joining sweetly in the hymn:

Saviour, breathe an evening blessing,
Ere repose our spirits seal;
Sin and want we come confessing,
Thou canst save, and Thou canst heal.

The next day we anchored and landed. It was late before we got on shore, the soldiers on our vessel had gone to the barracks, but there were not houses enough empty for all the officers. Some tents had been pitched on a large piece of grass near the barracks, and we went for the night into two of these. We managed to get two or three chairs and a table as well as our beds into the tent, and we sat outside the door to have our supper. Our little boy enjoyed it very much and said it was much better than being in a house, where the chairs were all steady and would not go over, no matter how he tried. Here the ground was uneven, and he was down on the soft grass and up again every minute.

But he did not like the insects, which were indeed annoying beyond description. There they were, in our faces, in our tea, on our bread, sticking in our butter, in fact everywhere. Some crawled about, leaving their wings behind them, till the table was covered with small gauze-like wings; some had a dreadful smell, and these were always flying against our faces, and even flew into our mouths if we incautiously opened them a little wider than need be. At last our poor little boy got quite worn out and asked in a piteous voice: "Oh, mama, are we not very naughty not

to go indoors, and are the plagues of Egypt come?" He was a little consoled when at last we contrived to get him a cup of tea without any insects, and began to enjoy the busy scene around us, which was really pretty.

The soldiers were all engaged in various ways; the women employed in making themselves comfortable; two or three good-natured soldiers' wives were going to and fro to get us hot water, and other things we wanted; the children were all playing about in the cool air, and the native servants were all flitting about, making the best arrangements that could be made for the night. At length night closed in, a heavy damp mist rose, and we were very glad to retreat within the tents and fasten them as closely as we could. With all our care, the fog made its way in; and when we woke in the morning everything was wet as wet could be; clothes, boots, all wet and sticky!

However, there was nothing for it but to make the best of things and to seek for a house as soon as possible. By the time the sun was high and the tents were beginning to be uncomfortably hot, we had succeeded in getting a small house. There was no glass in the windows, and two of the rooms had no doors; but there was a nice verandah all round it to keep the sun off, and it looked wonderfully more comfortable than our tent.

There is one very sad thing in the life of English people in India. There are so many dangers from climate and from other causes not known to us in our own country; that sorrow is always mixed up with joy in

every true account of life abroad. It is very good for us sometimes to be reminded how uncertain life is, that we may think more of the love and care of God for us and feel more grateful to Him for sparing us yet a little longer.

A party of soldiers with their wives and children were to go to a place some distance off up one of the large rivers. They were to go in boats and carry stores for a fortnight or more; they were even to take water with them, for the water in that country is sometimes unfit, not only to drink, but even to wash with, and if people use it it gives them horrible diseases of the skin. The boats started, every one in good spirits and well, and we hoped to hear of their safe arrival in the course of a few weeks. I saw Louisa and her mother and her little sister a day or two before they left; they were all rather pleased to go as we had heard a good account of the place.

At length news came. Two boats had arrived safely, but they had met with some sudden squalls, and the third boat had been upset. This was all that we heard at first, but in the course of the day we heard further particulars. It was on a Sunday evening the accident happened. The weather had been fine, and the sun was going down; the children had been talking and singing, and very happy; every one was hoping that by the next Sunday they would be settled on shore. The soldier's wife who wrote to tell a friend of the accident said she heard singing in the boat that was lost; they were singing the evening hymn that we had all sung the Sunday before

we landed at Moulmein, and which was a great favourite with the children:

Saviour, breathe an evening blessing,
Ere repose our spirits seal;
Sin and want we come confessing,
Thou canst save, and Thou canst heal.

Though destruction walk around us,
Though the arrows past us fly,
Angel-guards from Thee surround us,
We are safe if Thou art nigh.

The sun set, and soon after every one went to bed. In the night a sudden squall came on, and the writer of the letter said that soon after they heard a piercing cry. In the dim light they saw that one of the boats had capsized; they could distinguish something white clinging to the boat, but it loosed its hold and fell into the water before they could rescue the person, whoever it was. Two of the native boatmen swam to the other boats, but the water had closed for ever over all the rest who were in the unfortunate boat, among them Louisa, her father and mother, and little sister.

This sad accident made us all very sorrowful, and my little Sunday scholars looked very grave when they met on the next Sunday.

They had now a longer walk to come to me, but it was a pleasant one across nice grass, and in some parts under the shade of trees. During the week before we had moved from the little house I spoke of to a larger and better one with doors and shutters, and built on poles to keep it from the damp and from

snakes. This house was very comfortable. It had a verandah on one side with two flights of steps up to it; the verandah opened into a large room, the walls and floor of which were of dark wood; its length was the entire width of the house, and at the opposite end it opened on another verandah with shutters, which again opened on to a terrace at the top of a little hill covered with shrubs and pretty flowers.

The roof of this verandah was very sloping, because it was on the side from which the rain generally came, and the winds were sometimes high, and would beat the rain into the house. On each side of this large room there were bedrooms with verandahs. The house stood in a large space called a "compound." In the compound were the kitchen, the stables, and the huts for the servants. There was grass for the goats, and some trees and shrubs; altogether it was a nice, pretty house.

The next house was a school for the English orphans; their compound joined ours, but we could not see their house. At a little distance was the church, a pretty building built entirely of wood. It stood on a large grassy space, between us and the barracks, more than half a mile long.

A few days after we came to this house we heard that there were the footmarks of a tiger in the verandah of the little house we had left. We went to see, and true enough there were the marks of his great paws in the dust of the floor of the verandah. You may easily believe how thankful we felt that we had left, for there would have been nothing between us

and this fierce beast but a loose blanket, which we had hung up to do duty for a door; but God mercifully preserved us.

The manners and customs of the people in Moulmein are quite different from those I have been telling you of in Calcutta. It would take too long to tell of them now, and we must leave them for some other time. There is a great deal that is very interesting, and when we were settled in the place, we began by degrees to find out many curious customs.

Meantime, we had enough to do at home in arranging and settling everything. At that time furniture was very scarce in Moulmein, and as we had brought very little, we were very glad to get a chair one day, and a table another, just when we could.

So you must leave us trying to make the new house look a little like an English home.

WE had not been settled in our house at Moulmein many days before we began to find out some of the manners and ways of the country. One evening we saw a double row of most brilliant lights, extending for some distance down the hill, nearly opposite our house. None of our servants knew what these lights were for, but we heard from a Burmese servant in a family near by that they were in honour of one of the Burmese gods, and that there had been a great service celebrated that evening.

Early next morning we walked up the hill on which the temple was built. It was rather a high hill, just

above the town; before we reached the top, on which was the pagoda, or temple, we saw the offerings that had been brought that morning before sunrise for the god—fruit, flowers, little flags of various colours, rice, and vegetables. Every morning these were brought and placed before the goddess “Godama,” a fearfully ugly figure of enormous size, with fingers nearly as long as one’s arm.

It is a pretty sight to see the young women bringing these offering in jars or dishes of red clay, which they carry on their heads, but very sad to think that they are doing all this for a great senseless figure of stone that can neither see them nor hear them, and that they know nothing of the great God who made them, and who gives them all these delicious fruits and lovely flowers, and all the blessings they have. The priests of these temples are called “Poonghies”; they live together in various houses, and a house in which these priests live is called a Poonghy house. Every father is obliged to send his eldest son to be brought up by these Poonghies.

The view from the top of the hill was very pretty; on one side we looked down on the town and the river, as it wound its way to the sea; on the other we looked over the wooded country, and through the woods could still catch sight of the river, which looked like a silver thread coming down from its source, far, far off, in wild country where European foot has never yet trod. This was a very favourite walk with us.

While we were in Calcutta we had never been able

to walk at all, partly because of the dust, partly because of the heat, and partly because, as it is not the custom of the country, Europeans cease to be respected by the natives if they do so. It was quite a treat, then, to have a walk in the cool of the early morning, or late evening, and there was so much grass on the way to the hill, and so much grass upon it, that the walk was doubly pleasant. Thus it was that one evening we stayed rather later than usual, the sun had set, and darkness was coming on quickly; we were coming down the hill as fast as we could, when a large animal trotted past us; we could not distinguish what it was. A little lower down, close to where the officers' mess-house stood, we met one of the officers of the garrison. He asked us if we had seen a leopard. So this was the creature that had trotted past us; he had met it lower down, so had seen it, as the road was more open there. The officer advised us to make haste home, as there might be more leopards abroad, and they might attack us; so we did so.

We were still very much troubled by the insects I spoke of before, and soon we had another discomfort. We hardly dared to have even one window of the verandah open after the lamps were lighted because of the bats; they flew in in flocks, and their smell was most offensive; they flapped in our faces, settled upon us, and were a great torment. Yet sometimes the evenings were so close that we could not bear to shut up the house completely. But what with the insects and the bats we often had enough to do

to eat our suppers, and had many a laugh over them at our little mishaps.

Of other invaders of our home there was, for one, a large lizard, which is called the Cactoo, from the strange noise it makes, which is like this word prolonged thus, Cacc—tooo, cacc—tooo. There was also a kind of frog, the tree frog, which climbs up the walls quite easily. If a hat or cap were hung up at night, often one of these frogs would be in it in the morning; if a dress were hung up, no matter how high, a frog was nearly sure to be in the sleeve. We used often to think how awful the plague of frogs must have been in Egypt, when no doubt God sent these tree frogs upon the Egyptians, which can climb everywhere, as David describes: "Their land brought forth frogs, yea, even in their king's chambers."

Ants, too, there were in abundance, as there always are in hot countries. I have often sat for an hour at a time watching these wise little insects. Perhaps one would find a dead beetle; he would run all round and over it, and then go away. In a minute he would bring three or four more ants; they would run round and over the beetle, and then perhaps two would go away and bring more. By degrees enough would come to move the beetle, and they would carry him off in triumph. Some of these ants, the white ants, are very destructive; they will eat wood or anything; and it is the custom to put little saucers of water under the feet of the chest of drawers to keep them off. Cockroaches, too, are very plentiful, and do a great deal of mischief. If they should lay an egg on

any of one's clothes as they are folded up, it burns a hole all the way through every fold for perhaps five or six. These cockroaches all fly before rain comes, though they only crawl at other times.

There were also rats running about, though not nearly so many as we had had in Calcutta.

Now, having told you of the disagreeable animals we had, I must tell you of the pretty and interesting ones. There were our three goats and their kids always running about the compound, besides our ducks, fowls, and tame pigeons. We had two green parrots very prettily marked with black; they were very tame; they roosted in a large tree near the house, came in to be fed, and would perch on our shoulder or hand while we were reading or walking in the garden. This is the real way to enjoy having pet birds, not shut up in a cage, poor little things! but flying where they like, yet too fond of their home and their master and mistress to wish to stray.

Our little boy had four tame guinea-pigs that ran in and out at pleasure, and were always peeping out of some corner unexpectedly. We had, besides, a pet cat, whose fate was a sad one. She had three tiny kittens, which lived in a basket in their young master's room. Every night he had them and their basket put on a chair by his bedside, for he was quite as fond of them as pussy herself. One evening the cat came out for some milk; the verandah was open, and we did not notice another large cat which came in stealthily. Presently our puss dashed off; we heard

a scuffle, and the large strange cat ran out. We went into the room; each little kitten had a crimson mark round its throat and was dead. The poor mother was miserable; she came to me and jumped on my lap, a thing she had never done before. She would scarcely ever leave me, but she grew thinner and thinner, and pined away; in a fortnight from the death of her kittens she died, to the great grief of our little boy, and we buried her under the shrubs near the house.

The most curious animal we had was a Madagascar cat; I never saw one anywhere else. It had a long, low body, a head like a fox, and claws like a rat. It was very savage, and we were obliged to keep it chained, for though quite tame and good-tempered with us, it would fly at any stranger that came in. Its fur was soft, of a dark brown colour; ours was quite young, and therefore small, but they grow to the height of a foot and a half. It was very sagacious and amusing, almost as much so as a dog, whilst it was as fond of playing with its bushy tail as a kitten.

In the evening, if we did not walk, we generally drove through the town, that being the only road we could drive further than about a mile and a half, or two miles; besides that, it was a pretty sight to see the market and the shops.

The Burmese are naturally a tidy people; the women generally wore a loose dress of some dark colour, nothing on their heads, but their black hair twisted up very neatly, and a flower or some kind of ornament put in at one side. They wear bangles, ear-

rings, and nose-rings. These last are very ugly; they are often very large, and look most uncomfortable.

They are a quiet people, honest, but rather idle, though they can work very well when they like, and often make very good servants. They are very faithful nurses, and very kind to children. There was a little baby, the child of an officer, who was ill for six weeks, and then died. Her Burmese nurse was devoted to her, and would hardly leave her night or day even to eat. One evening, when I called as usual to see the baby, I found she was dead; her nurse was sitting beside her, fanning her with a large fan to keep the flies from settling on her. The child's mother said nothing would persuade the nurse to leave the baby or to let any one else watch by her, though the poor girl must have been quite worn out with fatigue. She only burst into fresh tears when spoken to about it, and said: "When the sun went, baby would go away for ever, and her heart would break." She knew that at sunset the poor little baby was to be buried, and she would not leave her till then.

Some Americans have established schools in Moulmein, and some of the Burmese are already Christians, and the schools are well attended. But by far the greater number know nothing about God or about our Blessed Saviour and His love for us. It will take a long time to teach them.

Besides the Burmese there are a great many Chinese in Moulmein. They all have a figure of a woman and a child in their houses or shops; most likely from some

old tradition of our Lord and his virgin mother. These images are encircled with flowers, and at night candles are lighted before them, so that as we drove through the town in the late evening all the shops were lighted up by these candles, which made the images and the gorgeous coloured flowers look very pretty.

The shopkeepers in Moulmein are very different from those in England. I mean the native shopkeepers. You go into a shop; the master takes no notice of you, but sits smoking and leaves you to look about for the thing you want. If you ask him whether he has the article you wish for, he probably points to a drawer, which you open and search for yourself. You ask the price and he tells you about three times as much as it is worth. You mention a smaller sum, which (if it be about the real value) he consents to take with a nod of his head. You put down the money and take away the article whilst he sits comfortably smoking as before. If you touch a wrong drawer or anything he does not wish to sell he growls out, "Mushyboo, Mushyboo," but never moves.

There are other shops kept by Europeans: these are more like large stores or warehouses, very little put out in them for show. When a ship arrives from England or America the European shopkeeper generally sends a notice round to all the principal people in the town with a list of the goods. Many of these are frequently bought before they are even unpacked.

There are also some Jewish shopkeepers. When we

were in Moulmein, there was one noted Jew there called "Ezekiel," who always had the choicest and most beautiful Chinese goods—carved ivory, shawls, cups, saucers, jars, and pretty cabinets of shining black with figures laid on in gilt.

My little Sunday scholars were very much pleased with the strange and curious sights, and we often talked of them and compared them with home. I had now forty-five to come to me every Sunday, both boys and girls, and as the weather was now very cool and pleasant I thought we should all enjoy spending a weekday evening together. So we invited all the children to come to tea, and tables were spread for them in the compound. We had tea, cakes, and fruits of every kind that was in season.

Tea was just over when one of the bearers came to tell me that there was something pretty to be seen from the other side of the house. We all went up: there were sounds of music, and a great crowd of people. Presently a procession came in sight, girls carrying flowers and fruit on their heads, and numbers of people in holiday dress; then came an elephant of pure white walking under a canopy of red and gold carried by eight men, and girls with fruit and flowers on each side of it; then another canopy, but we could not see what was under it because of the crowd, for it was something much lower than the elephant; then more girls carrying fruit and flowers. There was music, and shouts, and dancing.

The children stood watching the procession as it wound its way up the hill, the whole slope of which

was brilliantly lighted, and as soon as the darkness came on we saw fireworks.

I was sorry not to be able to find out the meaning of it all, and to which of the idols they were doing honour; or whether it was to the white elephant, which is a sacred animal throughout all those provinces. But neither I nor any of our servants understood the language of the place well enough to find out. After all had passed we talked a little about the poor heathen who were doing such honour to idols that could neither see nor hear, nor help them in a time of trouble. Then before we parted we prayed to God for all who do not know or love Him that He would send the bright light of His gospel to them; and for ourselves that we might love Him more and serve Him better and try to win the hearts of these poor heathen round us by kindness and gentleness. For it is not easy to be kind and gentle to them when they seem to do things on purpose to vex and provoke us. Then we sang this hymn:

O Saviour, bless us ere we go!
Thy word into our minds instil,
And make our lukewarm hearts to glow
With lowly love and fervent will.
Through life's long day and death's dark night,
O gentle Jesus, be our Light!

Then the children divided between them what was left of the fruit and cake, carrying it home for their small brothers and sisters who were too young to come. After this they all left, and in the dim light we could see their parents coming to meet them.

One day the bearer came to say that a man wanted to see me, and that he was a very clean man. I sent for him to come up. He had a long scarf twisted round him of blue, red, green, and black, which left his neck, arms, and legs bare, a white turban on his head, and his feet bare. In a sort of pouch that he contrived to make with this scarf he had two tusks of an elephant. The bearer told me that the man wanted to carve something out of the ivory, and that he would make something pretty for eight annas, which was equal to about a shilling. I asked what he could do? He showed me an elephant and a horse; and then said if I wanted anything else I must show him what it was like. Our little boy was delighted with these animals and brought a picture book to show to the man, who made us understand he could carve any animal from the pictures.

So he took the book and sat down cross-legged in a corner of the verandah, and began his work. He sat there patiently nearly all day, and towards evening he brought a monkey, beautifully carved. I asked him how much he was to have? He said, six annas (equal to ninepence). This was very little, as he had had to buy the ivory; but the bearer said it was too much, and they began to get cross with one another. I, of course, gave him the six annas, and told him to come again, which he did very often, and carved many pretty things for us.

When he had been several times my ayah came to me one evening and said he was very sick, so the people in the bazar said, and he was going to die, for

he had a great fever. He had been rather a favourite among the servants, and they were all very sorry. Poor little Sonni, the ayah, was very much frightened and said she hoped they would not all be sick, but many people in the bazar had the same great fever, and her husband had to go very often to the bazar to buy things.

This made us talk about death, and I asked Sonni what she believed? But Sonni did not like to say much about her religion, and she asked what I thought about death. I told her that though our bodies were buried, yet that my religion told me that one day they will rise again and live for ever, either very happy, or very miserable.

Sonni asked how I was "sure"? I told her how our Saviour Jesus Christ had come down from heaven to die for us, and how He had risen from the dead and gone up into heaven, and has told us as He rose from the dead, so shall we. She asked me to tell her about Jesus Christ, and I began to tell her how He came into the world a little baby, born in a stable, and she was listening with eager attention and eyes full of tears, when all at once she turned away and said, "I will go, Mem!" and she was gone out of sight before I could speak. I did not see her again till quite late; when, going down to the compound I found her crouching under the house sobbing. I asked her what was the matter? She made me understand that her husband had been very angry with her for listening to what I had said, and had beaten her. Poor Sonni! She told me she was never to listen again, she dare

not, for her husband would kill her if she did; "but," she said, "in my heart I will always love Jesus Christ for coming to be a baby for my sake, and in my heart I will say my thanks every day."

I heard afterwards that the tailor was very fond of talking to my English maid about religion, and that when she read to him out of the Bible, he always began to argue with her, which he liked doing very much. Sonni's husband was afraid that his wife would get fond of hearing the Bible, as she was sometimes there, and so he forbade her even to talk about religion, and was very angry when he had overheard her with me. God grant she may have heard the glad tidings of salvation since, in some other way, and found the peace she was longing for. Her history was a sad one; she was very young, only seventeen, but her husband hated her because she had no children; but she was a good affectionate wife and an attentive servant, and we were all fond of her. Her master sent for her husband and told him that if he beat Sonni again the police should be sent for, and he would be punished. He promised to behave better, and he did, but Sonni never durst listen to anything more about our blessed Saviour so long as she was with me; only she sometimes busied herself on Sunday in a corner where she could hear the children reading and saying their hymns, and hear what I read and said to them. She now understood a little English, and I trust that she was able to pick up some few words of comfort for her own heart. Poor little Sonni!

About this time the Shans came to sell their ponies and curious boxes. The Shans are a tribe who live in the hill country a long distance off. They come down to Moulmein every year to sell their goods, stay for a time, then go back again until the next year. We went to see one of their camps just outside the town. It was rather late in the evening, and they had packed up their baskets for the night, so would not sell anything, and only said "Mushyboo!" "Mushyboo!" if we went near their goods. Most of them were eating their supper, which consisted of fish and oil; some of them had rice, and some a small cake besides. This mess of rice and oil was in little tiers; they had neither knives, forks, nor spoons, but ate with their fingers. Both men and women had very long black hair, which was twisted up in a large knot on the very top of their heads. Some of the men wore hats of a peculiar sort of plait with crowns just about the size of the knot of hair and with very large brims.

Their dress was almost entirely of a dark cotton stuff, their shoes long and turned up at the toe, many of them red. We walked round the camp, as they did not at all seem to trouble themselves about our presence, and then came away. The next evening we went earlier to see their goods. There were, besides ponies, a great many baskets full of curious boxes; they are generally red outside with all sorts of patterns drawn on them in gilt. They are round and of various heights and sizes; inside are two, three, four or more trays fitting into one another.

They are very pretty, and are made of a material that resists damp particularly well—a great advantage in that country where the damp exceeds anything we have an idea of in England, and where a book you have been reading in the evening is covered with mildew in the morning.

We bought some boxes of all sizes and some curious umbrellas made from the bamboo tree. These umbrellas have thick sticks of bamboo cane twisted round with strips of bamboo; the outside of the umbrella is painted green, and round the hole where the stick comes through at the top, there is a piece of red leather cut in points. It is a strange, rough-looking thing, but an admirable protection from the sun. It is so thick that not even that hot sun can pierce through it; and we found them very comfortable and useful when walking about in the compound.

The trees and shrubs near our house had grown very much after the rains, and in the warm sunshine. It is not very healthy in a hot country to have any high trees near a house, nor shrubs either; besides, the latter give harbour for snakes. So we sent for an elephant to come and clear away the trees and shrubs. Two came, very large, fine elephants, considerably larger than the one we had ridden on when we were at Barrackpore.

It was quite pretty to see them break the boughs of the trees with their trunks and put them on their backs according to the instructions of their Mahout. Then they cleared away the small boughs of the shrubs near the ground, and trimmed them at the top and sides.

In the evening we took some cakes and sweetmeats out to them, but they were not very tame, and did not seem to understand. One of them began to toss his trunk and look fierce, so the Mahout said we had better go away lest we should be hurt, for that the elephant did not know we meant to be kind to it, and was getting very angry. He told us these elephants had not been very long in training, and at times were very troublesome and wild, though not really ill-tempered.

Month passed on after month, rains and fine weather came without much variety, except the arrival of the steamer from Calcutta. It came once a fortnight, and was eagerly looked for as it brought us news from home. Directly the steamer came in sight a gun was fired; we could watch her coming up the river from our house, and could see her all the time till she anchored, when the gun fired again. Directly after this a messenger went to the post-office with a large bag and brought up our letters and newspapers. When we had finished reading the newspapers they were sent to the soldiers and soldiers' wives at the hospitals, where they were gladly received. No words can tell the excitement with which we all watched for these mail days, and read every word of news about England and home. The sick men all brightened up at the sight of a newspaper, and the little children almost forgot their aches and pains in their pleasure in looking over the papers with pictures.

Then one party came down from one of the little

stations up the river, and another was sent up. We were all pleased to hear what the station was like and they gave a pleasant account of it. "They had had plenty of fruit" they said, and many of them had kept poultry and had quite comfortable little houses which they much regretted leaving, though they were pleased to see their old friends at Moulmein again. The band was played on the large piece of grass I have already spoken of twice a week, and the children often enjoyed a merry dance in one corner of the ground, for the evenings were generally tolerably cool.

Unfortunately, many changes took place before we had been there a year. Cholera again visited us, and carried off one after another, and again little children were left orphans and wives became widows. One poor woman's story touched us very much; her husband died of cholera late one night. She managed to steal into the room of the hospital where he was laid until morning, when he was to be buried, and she watched by him until she was found quite worn out with grief; she had fainted and was insensible. She recovered by degrees: she never complained and no one could find out that anything was the matter with her, but she pined away; neither food, wine, nor medicine did her any good, her heart was broken, and in three weeks she died. Her last words were: "I thank the Lord, for He has dealt lovingly with me."

Some other widows went home, for all had their choice whether they liked to stay or to have a free passage to their native villages. Some men were

invalided, others had served their time, and so it came about that we missed many old faces, and made acquaintance with many new ones. One evening, when the house was all shut up and it was nearly bedtime, a servant came and told us that there was a great fire, they had all been watching it for a long time, and now it was very very great, the "Chota Mem was looking at it."

We looked out and it was indeed a grand sight. The fire had begun in a Poonghy house (as we afterwards heard) and had spread to a store of spirits. The flames were magnificent tongues of fire of all colours, darting up every moment, whilst the whole sky was in a red glow. The wind was very high, and pieces of the roofs and walls of the wooden houses could be seen as they were carried along by the wind. There were several houses on the way up the hill; in one of them an officer lived whose wife was very delicate and quite crippled with rheumatism. We sent our carriage to bring her and her little boy to our house, for her own was plainly in great danger. Before she arrived every one had turned out of our house, all the men in the place of every class and colour were off to help in putting out the fire. When this lady arrived, she told me that the whole of the opposite side of the hill was in a blaze, that the officers and the men were trying to put out the fire, or to prevent it spreading by dashing water over the roofs of the houses that had not yet caught; but the wind was carrying large pieces of blazing wood in all directions. Some had been blown on to the large grass space by the church.

This was not far from our house or from the European orphan school next door to us. Presently the matron sent in a message for advice, as to what she should do, and to know if we could tell her whether the fire was spreading or not. I sent her a message to advise her to make her servants pour water on the roof of her house and said that I did not think the fire would reach us.

Some of our servants came back to pour water on our roof. It was certainly a grand sight, the fire went on burning for two hours without any decrease that we could see; but it plainly did not spread on our side of the hill, though we could not tell what was going on on the other side. At length it began to subside; the tongues of flame became fewer and paler till they died away altogether, and after a while the red glow did not cover so much of the sky. When we found the fire was really dying out we had leisure to think how we were to make room for our unexpected guests, for the houses in Moulmein have not many rooms, though the rooms are large. However, this was quickly settled, and every one who had been out to the fire returned home. About three o'clock in the morning we were all safely in bed, thankful from our hearts that the fire had been got under which had threatened to make us homeless and houseless in that wild country. It was not till daylight came that we realized what a narrow escape we had had, for large pieces of charred wood had fallen on to the large space of grass, and even into our compound and the compound of the European school.

Fires were not at all uncommon in Moulmein and the neighbourhood, almost all the houses being built of wood, but this had been an unusually bad one owing to its having spread to the spirit store.

Time passed on, and our turn came to make a change. We were to go home to England. After some little discussion how we were to go, we took passages in a vessel that was going to England with teak wood. The wife of another officer and her children were to go in the same vessel. The day was fixed, and altered again and again. At length the morning for our embarking really came. My Sunday scholars had come to wish me good-bye the evening before. We were very sorry to part from each other, and this our last evening together was a very pleasant one. Before we separated we once more all sang together the first and last verses of our accustomed hymn:

Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go.

The "Clara" lay at the mouth of the river some miles off: we were to go down in a small schooner, which was to start at eight o'clock in the morning. Our servants all came to receive their wages and their good characters, and to say good-bye. They all had got fresh situations except two who preferred going back to Calcutta, and for whom we had secured passages in the next steamer. We were very sorry to part with them, and they all seemed sorry to go. Sonni cried, and said she would like to come to England, but that was impossible. She had found a situation with a lady who would, I knew, be kind to

her, and as there were two or three little children I felt sure Sonni would soon settle down and be happy. We were all grieved to say good-bye to her and give her our farewell presents, but we hoped that for her all would prove for the best, and that from the children she might learn something more of what she longed to hear about, our Blessed Saviour, without fear of her husband. Part of her duty would be to amuse and attend on them, so that she would often hear them saying their prayers and hymns to their mother. Sonni had learnt quite enough English by this time to understand them.

The schooner started. We took provisions for the day with us, and were expected to reach the "Clara" that evening before sunset. There was not a breath of wind; in vain was first one sail spread, then another. We lay idly in the still, oily-looking water, and could not catch one breath of wind.

About the middle of the day the tide began to favour us, and we glided slowly along. But it was a very uncomfortable day; the schooner was small, and the party on board a large one, for friends had come to see us off, so that in all we were twelve in the little vessel besides the boatmen. The poor children were hot, and did not know what to do, and it was difficult to amuse them. At length the cool evening came on, the children grew sleepy, and one after another lay down to rest. Still we saw no sign of the "Clara." On, on we glided, till evening changed into night, and one by one the stars peeped out. We asked anxiously when we should reach the "Clara"? It was plain

that we could not go on board till morning even if we reached the place where she lay that night. The schooner had two tiny cabins, so it was decided the gentlemen should take one, and the ladies and the children the other. There was only one entrance to the two cabins, one of which lay beyond the other. The gentlemen had the inner cabin, and were obliged to drop down into it from the skylight. The outer cabin was for the ladies—rather the smaller of the two, but then it had the advantage of a door which at once decided us on choosing it. Here we were to pack up for the night; two ladies, four children, a young lady who had come to see us off, two European servants, and the young lady's ayah. There were four beds like tiny shelves between us, and the whole cabin was about the size of a large cupboard. There was great merriment over the arrangements, and the children were fairly wakened from their sleep, but they seemed to enjoy the fun as much as their elders.

By degrees we all settled ourselves tolerably well, and tried to go to sleep. We were all awake with early morning, but our misfortunes were not over: the wind had sprung up in the night and there was a swell, so that the schooner rolled most uncomfortably. But worse still! Some of us had thought in the night that we heard some one moving in the cabin, but we supposed it was the ayah, or some of our party who were not lodged to their mind, and took no heed. Now it turned out that the rats had been busy. The strings and hooks had been bitten off all our clothes, holes were bitten in some, great tears made in others; even

our boots had not escaped, and how to dress the children and ourselves we did not know. One child had a petticoat body and no skirt, another had a skirt and no body, another had half a boot, and another two quarters of a pair of boots.

We certainly made a very ragged appearance when we came out of our cabin and said we were ready to go on board the "Clara." However, the rats had made great inroads on the gentlemen's white jackets, and they were all too much out at the elbows themselves to make fun of us.

A chair was lowered from the "Clara," and we were taken on board one after another. There we found breakfast waiting for us, and very acceptable it was after our adventures. The "Clara" was not at all a large vessel: her sailors were of different nations and countries—English, French, and Danish. She was said to be a good seaworthy vessel, but not very quick, and teak is not a good cargo for quick sailing.

Our pilot was already on board, and, after we had finished our breakfast, farewells were said. The schooner went back to Moulmein with those who had come to see us off, and we weighed anchor and put out to sea.

It was a bright, lovely day, and we had an awning on the deck to keep off the heat of the sun. As I watched the shore, which was fast disappearing, and looked at the deep blue sky and the swelling and falling sea, thoughts of the goodness and power of God came into my mind; thoughts of how much God has given to us in this beautiful world to make us

love Him; and of how much He must love us when in earth, sea, and sky He has made so many fair and beautiful objects for our comfort and pleasure.

Before we reached England, indeed, we were to see fresh wonders, and to know more of the beauties of the world, and to see countries we very little expected to see, for we met with difficulties which we little expected. But for the present we were happy on this bright morning, sailing towards England with a light and fair wind and a clear sky.

We were bringing home some curiosities, amongst other things a tiger's skin, which, unfortunately, I was afterwards obliged to throw away, as it became full of insects; our two pretty parrots, some boxes bought of the Shans, and other purchases we had made in Moulmein.

The Madagascar cat we gave to Sonni, and her husband was delighted with it she said. The guinea-pigs we gave to the tailor. Our goats we brought on board the "Clara," as we should be dependent on them for milk. So we and they left Moulmein together: but our adventures before reaching home would take too long to tell.

A REMINISCENCE
OF THE
INDIAN MUTINY

A REMINISCENCE OF THE INDIAN MUTINY

THE PRIORY,
WINCHESTER,
Nov. 5, 1857.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT was early in this year that I left Dinapore to pay a visit to some friends at Futteyghur. At starting I was one of a large party; my husband was to accompany me and our three children to Allahabad, where our friend, Captain de Vesci, had appointed to meet us and be my escort to Futteyghur. Three ayahs, a bearer, and a khitmutgar, raised our number to ten.

When the Calcutta steamer, which was to convey us to Allahabad, reached Dinapore, we were pleased to see on board Mrs. Whitmore and her two daughters, who had been our fellow passengers from England the preceding year. They had remained in Calcutta to visit some relations, and now were on their way to join Mr. Whitmore at Agra, and were not a little delighted to meet with old friends going part of the way.

It was near sunset when the steamer arrived, and, according to custom, she was to remain all night at

anchor; so we brought the Whitmores on shore, and invited an impromptu dinner party to meet them. Although we were beguiled into late hours by the fascinating conversation of Mrs. Whitmore, and the sweet voices of Minnie and Clara, we all rose very early the next morning, and partook together of a "chota hazri," or "little breakfast," consisting of coffee, fruit, and "chapattees" or "country cakes." This over, we embarked on the steamer; and in less than half an hour Dinapore was fast fading from our sight.

So much has already been written about the journeys from Calcutta to the up-country stations of India by dâk, or "land travelling," as well as by steamboat, that I should only weary you by giving a long account of our voyage, which was much like all others, and unmarked by any particular events or adventures.

Ghazihore, the place so famous for rose-water; Benares, the ancient and sacred city; Mirzapore, a military station—all these we passed on our way to Allahabad. Here my husband was compelled to leave me and return to his duties; and Captain de Vesci undertook that I and my little ones should be well taken care of until he should be able to join us at Futteyghur, which he hoped to do in a few weeks.

Captain de Vesci had provided boats for us to proceed in, but the Whitmores had made their arrangements to go by carriage dâk; so, with many adieux and good wishes for a pleasant journey, we parted. There are not many places of interest be-

tween Allahabad and Futteyghur. Cawnpore, now, alas! so noted, is almost the only station of any importance. Here we landed and spent a happy evening with our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Turner, little anticipating the circumstances under which our next meeting would take place, or the fearful events that were so soon to happen in that fated city.

It was early in the morning when we arrived at Futteyghur. Mrs. de Vesci was waiting in her carriage on the river bank to receive us, and we proceeded at once to Captain de Vesci's bungalow. The children, delighted to leave the boats, prattled incessantly all the way, and shouted with joy when they found themselves able again to run about a compound.

The bungalow was a very pretty one, with a nice verandah all round, and situated no great distance from the Sepoy lines; it was such a home-like little place, with its flowers and fruit gardens, that my cousin, Emma de Vesci, had become warmly attached to it, and used to say it reminded her of the home of her childhood. Time passed quickly by, and was gliding quietly towards the end of my proposed visit, when my attention was excited one morning by my old and faithful ayah. She had lived with us many years, and now devoted herself entirely to our youngest child. On going into the room unexpectedly where the baby was asleep, I found Sonni seated on the floor by the bedside fanning the child, and crying. I asked her what was the matter? She seemed confused, and said nothing ailed her. I inquired whether she was tired of being at Futteyghur, and wanted to see

her own family at Dinapore, but to this and all other questions she replied in the negative, and, as the baby just then began to move, she commenced one of those monotonous songs with which native women are wont to lull their little charges to sleep. I thought her manner odd, but concluded some trifle had vexed her, and took no further notice; and when I next met her her manner was the same as usual.

A few days afterwards the elder children complained that the servants were always talking together, instead of playing with them. Robert, the eldest, said that when he asked Buxoo (the bearer) what they were talking about, Buxoo said that he and his friends would very soon be rich, and then he would be a Sahib (gentleman) and not a bearer any longer. That same day Captain de Vesci's subaltern came in to tiffin looking very anxious and distressed. He said he had that morning received a letter from a friend of his, giving an account of the discontented spirit that prevailed among the Sepoys in his Station. The letter further stated that although the writer did not wish to be an alarmist, he could not help thinking there was great cause for anxiety, and that the mutinous spirit had by no means been quelled by the disbanding of the regiment at Barrackpore.

Mr. Cunningham, who was a clever young man, entirely coincided with this opinion, and also observed that the reported sending about of cakes (if true) boded no good. Emma and I felt rather alarmed, but Captain de Vesci said he felt sure of his own men, and would trust them implicitly. The next news did

not cheer us, and every succeeding post brought us worse intelligence; the mutiny was plainly spreading far and wide. The particulars are but too well known, almost better known indeed in the order of their dates to you in England than to us, for what with rumours, uncertain news, false reports, and the agitation of mind caused by such fearful events, my notion as to their order may be less accurate than your own. Suffice it to say, the rumoured fall of Delhi made our hearts tremble and caused Captain de Vesci to pronounce India to be no longer a place for women and children.

My husband wrote to implore me to lose no time in coming to Dinapore. He said he could not possibly leave his post there, and he begged me to start while travelling was still practicable. Captain de Vesci also begged his wife to accompany me, especially as a friend of his was going as far as Cawnpore, and the opportunity of an escort was not to be despised.

On the fourth day after the receipt of my husband's letter, our hasty preparations were completed and we left in boats for Cawnpore. On our arrival there we were again hospitably received by the Turners. They took a very gloomy view of things, and Mr. Turner pressed upon us the advisability of making a very short stay at Dinapore, and of pressing on to Calcutta, and from thence to England with as little delay as possible. We calculated that if we were to proceed at once to Allahabad, we should get there some days before the departure of the steamer to England. It was therefore more prudent and pleasanter for us to spend those few days with the Turners, especially as

the children had suffered from the voyage down, and a few days rest would do them good.

Two days after our arrival at Cawnpore Sonni came to me and in a mysterious whisper advised me not to stay, but to go on as quickly as I could. I asked her "why"?

She replied: "Mem Sahib, Mem Sahib, Turner's ayah not good."

"How not good?"

"She no like 'chota baba' [meaning my baby] and she call 'Missy Baba, burra milcut' [very cross]." Not thinking this a sufficient reason I pressed her more, but she would only say: "No Mem not stay; do go."

I felt a conviction there was something behind that she was afraid to disclose, especially as she looked anxiously round the room while speaking, and I became really desirous to leave Cawnpore. My fears were not diminished by her hastily whispering to me not to say before the servants that she wished to go, and by her beginning to sing directly she saw Mrs. Turner's ayah in the verandah. She fixed her keen dark eye on me while she chanted:

Hathi per howdad
Ghora per gyn
Juldi jas juldi jas
Lord Sahib Canning.

Her alteration of the last line of this well-known nursery ditty struck me, and I at once felt there was more behind than she durst tell. Mrs. Turner, Emma and I, talked it over and settled that our party should

leave Cawnpore without delay. When Mr. Turner came in he quite approved of our decision, and begged his wife to go with us, but she would not hear of it. She said she felt perfect confidence in her servants and believed Sonni's distrust of her ayah to be merely a blind. If they had had children the case would be different; but as things were she would stay by her husband, and with plenty of weapons for defence in the house she had no fear. Still her husband urged her to go, still she refused, and anxious as he was I am sure he felt proud of his courageous wife.

Mr. Turner suggested that we should take advantage of an escort to Daramon.

An acquaintance of his, Mr. Duff, an indigo planter, was to leave Cawnpore for that place the next morning, and would willingly do all he could for us. This was accordingly arranged, and when I told the servants to be ready, Buxoo said he had a sick brother in Cawnpore and could not leave him. Next morning Buxoo and the two younger ayahs were missing; Mr. Turner's servants said they were gone to the bazar, but we could not wait and set out without them.

Mr. Duff met us on the river bank, and Mr. Turner committed us to his care with many fervent wishes for our safety. We hardly came away too soon, as we have since heard, but at the time we felt a little reassured by Mr. Duff who said he had been a long time in India, and should feel as safe in Cawnpore as in London. Sonni's face brightened considerably as

we left Cawnpore, and once away she seemed to think little of the trouble of looking after three children instead of one.

We pursued our way down the river all that day, and at night moored our boats near a little creek. Our khitmutgar went on shore to buy some milk and fruit at a hamlet near. When he came back he said we must hasten on as fast as we could next morning, for there was going to be a great battle at Cawnpore, and all the Sahibs would be killed.

His story was very confused, but it alarmed Emma and myself, and made us wish Mrs. Turner had been with us. Still Mr. Duff was incredulous, and said reports were never to be trusted, and that the whole story was too incoherent to be believed. But he made no objection to hurry on, and before sunrise we were again floating down the river.

In the afternoon a sudden squall came on which delayed us, and that evening we again moored our boats on the bank of the river. The children had felt the heat very much during the day, and Sonni proposed that we should land and walk about. Panchcowrie (my khitmutgar) insisted on going on shore first to see if all were safe, as he attached more importance to the report than Mr. Duff did. He soon came back to say all was right. I at first thought of remaining in the boat with the baby, who was not well, but Mr. Duff persuaded me to land, and came also himself.

When we had walked some little distance we found a retired spot, and Panchcowrie asked if the child-

ren might sit down there and eat some chapattees and milk which he had brought with him. Mr. Duff rather opposed this, fearing another squall might come on; but the children were so eager that he good-naturedly gave way, and said he would go back to the boat for an umbrella in case of a shower. Meanwhile Panchcowrie was to spread the repast, and Mary engaged to keep a seat and the best chapattee for Mr. Duff, of whom she was growing quite fond.

He had been gone some little time, and we were beginning to wonder why he did not come back, when we heard a shot. Panchcowrie started, Sonni turned deadly pale, and both Emma and I felt our hearts throb violently. One or two more quickly succeeded. Panchcowrie hurried us behind some thick bushes which bordered the path, hastily gathered up every fragment of the repast, and then whispered to us to remain quite still whilst he went to see what was going on. He promised to come back as soon as he possibly could.

How shall I describe our feelings on seeing my faithful servant, our only protector, disappear rapidly down the winding path that led to the boats! we, a defenceless party of women and children! what was to become of us? We preserved a breathless silence; and even Robert and Mary, whose eager eyes were fixed earnestly on us, seemed to enter into our feelings of awe. We dreaded alike to remain where we were, or to return to the boats. Panchcowrie seemed to have been gone an interminable time. At last he

came back, but we could see by his face he was the bearer of no good tidings. He told us he came in sight of the boats just before the last shots were fired, and saw a party of men attacking Mr. Duff. Some of the boatmen had gone away, but the two who remained were doing their best to help Mr. Duff. The next moment he saw Mr. Duff shot dead by one of the Sepoys (for such he pronounced the attacking party to be), whilst another bullet killed one of the boatmen. The other seemed also to have been wounded in the fray.

Panchcowrie, greatly alarmed, concealed himself in the bushes, and saw the Sepoys rifle the boats and look round to see if they could discover any one else; and then, apparently satisfied that they would fall in with the rest of the party in the village, start off in that direction, happily the very opposite to that in which we were concealed. The question now was what we should do. Emma was in favour of staying where we were; and I agreed with her. We were fearful of being discovered if we made any attempt to regain the boats; and we did not know whether, even if we succeeded in doing so, we dared trust the boatmen.

The risk of a night under the bushes was trifling compared with the danger of falling, with these dear helpless babes, into the hands of monsters of whose atrocities we had already heard enough to make us shudder. Yet our hearts misgave us at the thought of deserting our poor wounded boatman who had done all he could to help Mr. Duff. Emma therefore

proposed that she and Panchcowrie should go down to the boat and see what could be done for him. By using all speed they could return to me and the children before it was dark. They went away, but soon returned, saying that in the dim light Panchcowrie had seen the boatmen going down the river with the boats, and there was now no resource but to make the best accommodation we could for the night. To go near the huts in the neighbourhood of course was not to be thought of. Panchcowrie was invaluable; he hunted about amongst the bushes and found a more secluded spot, where we all laid down for a few hours.

Longer we dared not linger! The children, unconscious of their danger, and pleased with the novelty of their situation, soon slept peacefully; but for us there was little rest. All night we listened anxiously to the noises in the neighbourhood, sufficiently wild at any time, now doubly so. Emma and I scarcely dared even to whisper to each other. To add to my distress we had, of course, no covering with which to shield the children from the night air, and my poor baby was moaning piteously.

I cannot describe the miseries of that night. Left in a strange country, miles distant from any Europeans, hardly knowing who were our foes, and dreading lest the hand of every one we should meet might be against us, no wonder our hearts sank; and not only for ourselves, but also for our husbands, for if we should make good our escape, what fearful trial might not be in store for us!

Before dawn we started on our journey. Panchcowrie took the precaution of discarding every article of dress that could make him known as a servant, and went to a hut to get a little milk and some rice for our breakfasts. The elder children eat heartily, and as soon as the frugal meal was over we hurried forward as fast as we could. Panchcowrie took charge of Robert, Sonni and myself tried alternately to soothe the poor baby, who was suffering severely, and Emma and her ayah carried Mary by turns.

All day we walked and ran, and towards evening grew so weary that rest was absolutely necessary. We were near a village, but who could tell whether it contained friends or foes? We hid ourselves in a clump of bushes whilst Panchcowrie went out in search of food, which the children, tired and hungry, were beginning to cry for. Happily the baby had fallen asleep, and though fever was still burning in her veins, she seemed in less pain than she had been all day. Panchcowrie came back with some milk and rice. Robert and Mary were rejoiced, and indeed we were all very thankful. He had also procured a little arrack, which we kept as a reserve in case of need. Panchcowrie said the villagers were inclined to be friendly, but that they gave such alarming accounts of marauders of all kinds, and seemed so afraid of committing themselves by expressing any sympathy with Europeans, that he was sure we had better go off as soon as we possibly could.

I hastily prepared some food for my sick infant, and took her from Sonni to give her some warm

milk. It was just in time for me to see the last smile pass over the placid little face. My sweet little baby opened her eyes and looked at me for one moment, and the next her spirit had left her suffering body, and winged its flight from this world to its heavenly home.

I sank down with a crushed, heart-sick feeling, and what passed during those moments of agony I do not know. The first thing I became conscious of was Panchcowrie lifting the lifeless baby from my arms, Emma at the same time putting Mary in its place, and Robert beside me. She then went away with Panchcowrie; I knew their errand too well, but could neither speak nor move. Several days after, Emma told me of the prayers offered for me and mine by the side of the little grave under a cocoanut tree in the Indian jungle.

On that wretched night there was no time to indulge grief. As soon as it was fairly dusk we were obliged to set out again. Robert and Mary wanted to run by me, each holding a hand; but this was impossible, and the dear children, anxious to do all they could to save me trouble, quietly allowed themselves to be carried, and soon fell asleep. Emma and I walked together speaking a word of consolation to each other, but more often engaged in prayer for protection from the dangers that surrounded us. When we had walked for about four hours, we determined to take a rest, for Sonni's strength was failing, and to forsake her was not to be thought of. Her eyes still streamed with tears for the loss of the little baby, and

what with agitation and fatigue, she was almost worn out. I felt ill, too; grief had done its work, and Emma insisted that even at the peril of our lives we should take a short rest.

So once more we lay down on some grass behind some bushes. About an hour after we had settled ourselves we heard voices shouting and talking loudly. It was a party of rebel Sepoys. From our hiding place we could see their muskets and bayonets glisten in the starlight. It was an awful moment, and I tremble now at the recollection. If once they discovered us, what an awful fate ours would be! Emma and I held each other tightly, and oh! what fervent prayer went up in those fearful moments. Nearer and nearer the sounds approached, till they were almost close. We strained our eyes and held our breath, trembling lest the noise should wake the children and make them cry out. Nearer still, and nearer, and I heard the words "Cawnpore" and "Sahib Logue."

Suddenly the party turned down a narrow path close to our hiding place, but on the side where the bushes were the thickest. To our great relief they made no stop; the voices became less distinct, and gradually died away in the distance. Our hearts were filled with thankfulness for our preservation, but sleep was banished for that night.

We hastened onwards. Towards morning the sky became overcast, and a thunderstorm came on, the rain falling in torrents. Weary and footsore, we pressed on through the drenching storm. It was

truly a wretched day, and to increase our misery we did not know in what direction to go. I at first thought of Allahabad, but Emma reminded me that we had heard reports that the fort there was in the hands of the rebels. The reports might be false, but the risk of going there was too great. She proposed we should make our way to the river again and try to get a boat.

Panchcowrie, too, seemed to think this a good plan. So on we went, till about the middle of the day, when both Sonni and Emma's ayah grew faint; the children, too, were beginning to feel the effects of hardship and exposure, and even Panchcowrie looked pale and worn. We therefore gladly took advantage of a very shady, retired spot, and rested again. We had been there about half an hour, when the sound of voices made us crouch together more closely behind the bushes with beating hearts. The voices were low and often hushed.

The voices came nearer and nearer, but what was our surprise and joy to see an English lady and gentleman make their way to our hiding place, attracted like ourselves by the advantages of the spot. The delight was mutual, and we were great gainers, for Mr. and Mrs. Wright said they would not leave us again. Our spirits were greatly raised by this reinforcement, and in a couple of hours we continued our journey wonderfully cheered. Even the children looked brighter and happier, though they complained of being hungry and tired.

It was near midnight and pouring with rain before

we ventured to sit down again. We were so wet and footsore we could not get on, and for the last two hours had been rather stumbling than walking over the ground. Our faithful servants even now refused to leave us, and said they would live and die with us, but never go away, though Emma and I had lost our all, and Panchcowrie's small stock of rupees was nearly exhausted. Mr. and Mrs. Wright had saved very little, and what they had we were anxious to keep in reserve to pay for a boat if we should be so fortunate as to reach the river.

We threw ourselves down on the grass, and my good khitmutgar set out on a voyage of discovery. After a very long absence he returned with news that alarmed us all. A party of rebels were in the village, close to us, and the whole country was infested with robbers and ruffians of every description. Panchcowrie, as well to avoid suspicion as to get information, had joined a group of villagers who were smoking their hubble bubbles, and talking over a fire in one of the huts.

From them he heard such an account of the disturbed state of the country as made him tremble for us. Fortunately, in the course of their conversation, the villagers spoke of a zemindar a few miles distant, who was said to have befriended Europeans on several occasions. Our khitmutgar, who had now a large party to buy provisions for, was afraid to get much from these people, who seemed to glory in all the horrors that had been practised on our unfortunate countrymen. He only ventured to buy some milk,

under pretence of wanting it for a child of his brother who was sick. But even this milk was very acceptable, for Robert had long been complaining of thirst, and poor little Mary had been drooping all day. My dread lest I should see my children pine away one by one, and die before my eyes, increased every moment.

Yet it seemed as though nothing but a miracle would save us, and if we were all to perish, better for the children to be taken first. Emma and I thought of our husbands, and almost felt if we could but see them once more, death would be welcome; at least, if it came in the form of disease, which would be far preferable to falling into the hands of the rebels, a fate we could hardly expect to avoid. Mr. and Mrs. Wright were very desponding on this evening, but not much was said, not a word of complaint uttered, I believe. We tried to cheer ourselves by speaking of the "Providence" that had so wonderfully preserved us hitherto, and this strengthened us for the future, and nerved us for what might lie before us.

After two hours' journey we reached the zemindar's compound, and halted while Panchcowrie went to the house. He found a servant who told him we might stay in a shed near the house till sunrise, and that we should have some food, but that we were not to remain any longer. How grateful we were for this hospitality! Some curry and rice were soon ready; we dried our wet clothes by a wood fire, the zemindar's servant brought us some arrack, which warmed us, and we lay down to sleep.

A little before sunrise Sonni woke me up; Panchcowrie had gone to prepare breakfast. He brought us some curry, rice, chapattees, and milk. He had also filled a basket with food, and a bottle with milk for the children, so we were well provided for that day. He and the ayahs went away to eat their food with the zemindar's servants, and we stayed in the shed.

Before we had finished our breakfast Sonni came back with some dark-looking stuff which she proceeded to rub over the children, and she bid us dye ourselves with it as well. We asked no questions, but complied.

Sonni then gave me an ayah's dress, and Emma's ayah had one ready for her. The good women had sold the bangles off their arms to buy these for us from the zemindar's servants. Panchcowrie came soon afterwards with a dress for Mr. Wright, who had made over the little money he had to the khitmutgar for public use. The only valuable now remaining was Mr. Wright's watch, which was by common consent to be kept to pay for the boat. Panchcowrie and Sonni had also managed to get a disguise for Mrs. Wright.

We again pressed the servants to leave us here, and not run the risk of going on with us, but Sonni and Panchcowrie were firm, and Emma's little ayah cried so bitterly the subject was dropped, and never spoken of again. We had scarcely put on our disguise when the zemindar's servant came to warn us off. The zemindar, however, sent us a message to say he wished us well, but dared not give us shelter for

longer; he sent us down a basket of provision for which we were very thankful.

Panchcowrie warned us to speak as little as possible if we should meet natives, and Mrs. Wright, who knew hardly any Hindustanee, was to pretend to be sick and unable to speak if any one addressed her. Poor Emma was so wearied and footsore, that but for Mr. Wright's assistance I hardly know how we should have got her along that day. He was invaluable; he helped and supported her, and cheered us all by the bright view he took of our dark prospects.

At last we came to a village. Sonni asked a woman for some fruit for the children. The woman inquired who we were. Sonni replied that we had lived with the Sahib Logue, but there had been a great battle, and we had escaped, and were going home, and the children were sick and wanted some fruit very much. The villagers offered that we should rest, but Panchcowrie made an excuse for hurrying on, and we left them, well satisfied to find our disguise had been successful.

Three weeks passed by, in terror by night, in fear by day, till hope began to flicker fast. We toiled on under scorching suns, or pelting rain, sometimes wading through streams, sometimes fighting our way through jungly paths. We had one satisfaction, that our native disguise often procured for us a shed at night, and some refreshment; but on these occasions I often felt much alarm and anxiety. We bore up wonderfully well on the whole for the excitement of

escaping for our lives prevented us from feeling either heat, or cold and wet, as we otherwise should have done. Still Mary suffered from fever, and Robert was far from well.

At last, one evening, we came again to the river at a village, the name of which I do not know. Panchowrie said he had been there once, and knew it to be a long way below Allahabad." What joy! we were then within reach of the English steamers. Panchowrie was, as usual, our ambassador, and Mr. Wright's watch stood us in good stead. The villagers gave us food and milk for the sick "babas," for whom they expressed great pity, and the old woman brought me some medicine for Mary, which she said would cure her. They were all very kind, and sunrise found us once more gliding down the river.

For two days my little Mary hung between life and death; but the old woman's medicine did her good, and the fever abated. We were also very anxious about Mrs. Wright, who seemed every day to grow weaker.

But, mercifully, we were spared the sorrow of losing any more of our number; and on the third day after we took to the boat, our hearts were gladdened by seeing an English steamer coming down the river. She was crowded with passengers. We hailed her; but the Captain, seeing only what he supposed to be a boat full of natives, was not at all inclined to stop. She passed us pretty close, and as she did so Mr. Wright hailed her again, as none but an Englishman could! In less than five minutes we were on board and safe.

We reached Dinapore in due time, and Panchcowrie went directly on shore to my husband, who was mourning us as dead, and was overjoyed to hear of our escape, and to see us alive and well. He would not allow us to stay at Dinapore, but implored me to hasten to England, and urged Emma to do the same.

Of course he could not himself leave Dinapore, and, though I would gladly have stayed there with him, to add to his anxieties by doing so was not to be thought of. Emma could have no news here of her husband, that was at all certain, though enough to make her most uneasy; so she decided to come on to Calcutta, and Mr. Wright insisted that his wife should do the same, and begged me to take a passage for her to England in the same vessel that I should go in. He himself stayed in Dinapore.

When we reached Calcutta we heard of some of the poor little children who had been brought there by native servants, and of whom no one seemed to know anything. Emma de Vesci adopted two of these poor babies, Mrs. Wright another, and I adopted one just the age of my sweet infant. When Mrs. Wright and I started for England, Mrs. de Vesci, in spite of all our entreaties, stayed in Calcutta. Poor thing! she could not make up her mind to leave India till she should have had news of her husband.

Awful news it has been; for she, with many others, has had to mourn the loss of a husband cruelly murdered among the fugitives from Futteyghur to Cawnpore. I have never heard from her since that fearful intelligence.

Of Mr. and Mrs. Turner I have heard nothing either, but I still try to hope they escaped from that doomed city! Mrs. Wright has been very ill since we returned home, but she is recovering. We are near neighbours, and meet nearly every day.

Amidst all our cares and anxieties for our dear ones still in India, it is a great consolation to see Robert and Mary recovering their good looks and natural spirits. They are now running in the garden with faithful Panchcowrie, who came with us to England, and good Sonni is at this moment lulling my adopted child with the same song with which she used to soothe my own little darling in our Indian home. "Taza bee taza—non bee nou." I send you a paraphrase of it, by whom I do not know:

Sweet singing minstrel, once again,
Sing to the air that sparkling strain,
Sing of sweet flowers that round us blow,
Sing of streams that round us flow,
Sing of bright wine in its ruby glow,
Taza bee taza—non bee nou.

Flowers may fade in the woven wreath,
Streams pass away in the hot winds breath,
Even our bright wines rosy ray
Dims as the night gives place to day;
Love's sweet smiles alone we know,
Taza bee taza—non bee nou.

Then let us careless pass our hours,
Though we love wine and streams and flowers,
While we have love, 'tis that which throws
Joy in the cup, and bloom in the rose,
Sing then of love, which makes all below,
Taza bee taza—non bee nou.

I think I have now told you all I can remember of our escape. It is difficult to write a clear account of those days, or to collect my thoughts. All was so exciting, so painful, that I dread even to think of that fearful time.

I must leave off, for here comes a letter from India. . . . Good news, my dear husband is safe and well, and poor Emma de Vesci is coming home by the next mail.

Affectionately yours,

* * *

(Written by M. A. Faber.)



CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
305 De Neve Drive - Parking Lot 17 • Box 951388
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1388

Return this material to the library from which it was borrowed.

University of California, Los Angeles



L 006 537 116 3

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 001 137 172 1

nia